DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 068 757 AC 012 863

AUTHOR	Mathews, Thomas Cochran; And Others
TITLE	The Soil Conservation District Movement in Tennessee.
INSTITUTION	Tennessee Univ., Knoxville. Agricultural Extension Service.
PUB DATE	Aug 72
NOTE	19p.; Research Summary of a Graduate Study; Extension Study 26, S.C. 802
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Conservation Education; Environmental Education; Federal Government; Higher Education; Local Government; *Masters Theses; *Soil Conservation; *Soil Science; State Government; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS	Tennessee

ABSTRACT

The development of soil conservation districts in Tennessee is the subject of this graduate study. Related literature, existing records, and personal interviews are used to record progress since Tennessee adopted Public Law 46 establishing soil conservation districts in 1939. In 1959 all 95 counties of Tennessee had organized soil conservation districts; continued cooperation of Federal, State, and local agencies is necessary to continue to combat soil erosion. (Author/RS)

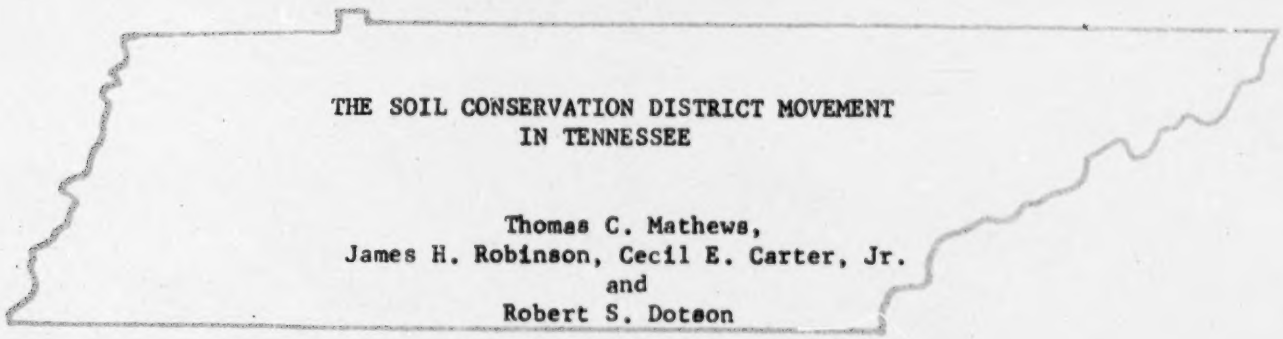
ED 068151

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RESEARCH SUMA CULTURAL EXTENSION

Extension Study No. 26
S. C. 802

A Research Summary of a Graduate Study



THE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MOVEMENT IN TENNESSEE

Thomas C. Mathews,
James H. Robinson, Cecil E. Carter, Jr.
and
Robert S. Dotson

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION EDUCATION
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

August, 1972

1

AC012863

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
	ABSTRACT	ii
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Situation and Purpose	1
	Research Methodology	2
II.	MAJOR FINDINGS	2
	Reason for Organization and Continuation	2
	The Initial Period, 1940-1949	3
	The Final Period, 1950-1959	4
III.	CONCLUSION	5
	RECOMMENDATIONS	5
	SOME SUGGESTED REFERENCES	6
	APPENDIX	7

THE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT MOVEMENT IN TENNESSEE

by

Thomas Cochran Mathews, James H. Robinson,
Cecil E. Carter, Jr., and Robert S. Dotson

June 1972*

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to record the development of soil conservation districts in Tennessee utilizing related literature, existing records, and personal interviews with selected parties involved through the years.

Soil erosion was a problem that the early colonists had to struggle with and the struggle continued until H. H. Bennett brought it national attention. During the 1930's the occurrence of several great dust storms, that reached from the midwest to Washington, D. C., helped further impress legislators with the need for a national program to control this type of erosion.

In 1935 Congress passed Public Law No. 46 which called for the setting up of an organization to be known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). To help the SCS bring soil erosion under control more quickly, a model soil conservation district act was drawn up, which all states adopted in total or with very minor changes. Tennessee adopted this model law in 1939.

It took 20 years, 1940-1959, for all the 95 counties of Tennessee to organize individual soil conservation districts as provided for in the Act. Previous agreements prior to the Act and World War II were partially the cause of this long time span. The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service cooperated

*Date of completion of an M.S. degree thesis by Thomas C. Mathews entitled "The Soil Conservation District Movement in Tennessee" on which this summary is based.

with SCS in the districting process.

It was noted that the continued cooperation of Federal, State and other interested agencies and organizations will be needed if this type of work is to progress and expand in the future.

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. INTRODUCTION

Man's struggle to control soil erosion is as old as recorded history. It is still being written about today and estimates have been made as to the relatively small amount of land that will be available per person by the year 2300 A.D.

It has been verified that accelerated soil erosion depresses man's economic, social, physical, and spiritual well being through reduced crop yields, lower income, impaired health, and increased damage from floods.

Situation and Purpose

It has long been recognized that soil conservation districts were formed in Tennessee counties, as a result of cooperative efforts of county Extension agents and Soil Conservation workers, to combat accelerated soil erosion, a serious conservation problem in Tennessee.

Since no previous effort was uncovered regarding the making of a permanent record of historical circumstances surrounding the origin of soil conservation districts in Tennessee, it was felt that a study of this nature might be of value to all people interested.

---

*Thomas C. Mathews, Graduate Student, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee.

James H. Robinson, Associate Professor, Extension Plant and Soil Science Department, The University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Cecil E. Carter, Jr., Associate Professor, Agricultural Extension Education Department, The University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, Knoxville, Tennessee

Robert S. Dotson, Professor and Head, Agricultural Extension Education Department, University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Research Methodology

The methods selected for use were: 1) a historical review of records concerning the creation, growth and development of soil conservation districts in Tennessee; 2) a review of related literature; and 3) personal interviews with representatives of the agencies involved who were in appropriate positions during the times studied.

The study was broken into two time periods, namely: (1) the Initial Period, 1940-1949; and (2) the Final Period, 1950-1959.

II. MAJOR FINDINGS

Reasons for Organization and Continuation

It was found that American farmers became concerned with the problem of soil erosion as early as 1615 when William Boyd of Virginia saw the topsoil of his farm being carried away by heavy rainfall.

The writings, observations and experiments conducted by such men as Jared Eliot of Connecticut, John Lorain of Pennsylvania, Nicholas Sornby of Mississippi and others, indicated that the problem of soil erosion was neither unique to any one geographical area nor limited to a single type of farming operation.

It was not until the coming of H. H. Bennett, known since as the father of soil conservation, that soil erosion control work gained national prominence as a program of vital import to the nation. The great dust storms of the 1930's helped to convince the American people of the value and need for soil erosion control.

Through the mutual efforts of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bennett, and Congress, a national law was passed and signed in 1935 that established the Soil Conservation Service as a national agency to work on soil erosion.

All states passed soil conservation district acts to allow the districts to become local unit based. This proved successful because it established procedures for organizing districts and gave needed power to the districts to promote and carry out soil erosion control practices on the lands within their jurisdiction through agreements with local landowners.

All counties in Tennessee had operating soil conservation districts by September 9, 1959; but it required 20 years, 1940-1959, for this to become possible.

The Initial Period, 1940-1949

A summary of the findings during this time period is presented below.

1. It was not until 18 months after the passage of "The Tennessee Soil Conservation District Act" in 1939, that the first district was organized (See Appendix Table I).

2. Due to a formal agreement entered into by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), United States Department of Agriculture, and the Land Grant Colleges in 1935, no soil conservation districts were to be organized in counties where soil erosion control work was under the supervision of TVA.

3. The first Tennessee districts to be organized were in Sumner and Lauderdale Counties on June 13, 1940 - non-valley counties (See Figure 1, Appendix).

4. The peak of counties organizing districts during the Initial Period came in 1941, when 13 non-valley counties organized districts.

5. World War II slowed down the rate of districts being organized due to the lack of trained technicians to place in the new districts and the emphasis placed on wartime food production.

6. No new districts were formed in either 1948 or 1949.

7. The dates, counties, and SCS order in which districts were organized during the Initial Period, 1940-1949, are tabulated (See Table I, Appendix).

8. To see how the soil conservation districts organized from 1940-1949 and 1950-1959 fit into the Agricultural Extension Supervisory districts of the State of Tennessee (See Figure 2, Appendix). We see that early conservation districts appeared in all but District 5 - non-valley counties being involved.

9. How the soil conservation districts organized from 1940-1949 and 1950-1959 fit into the soil conservation areas of the State of Tennessee [redacted] shown (See Figure 3, Appendix). It is seen that the first conservation districts formed in soil conservation areas 1,2,3, and 4 - non-valley counties.

10. The number of counties forming districts, each year, for the Initial Period 1940-1949 (See Figure 4, Appendix).

The Final Period, 1950-1959

A summary of the findings during this time period includes:

1. In 1942, the original agreement of 1935 was terminated and replaced with a new one. Although this cleared the way for organization of soil conservation districts in the Tennessee Valley counties, no valley counties were organized until 1950.

2. One of the most helpful agreements was the Plan for Coordinated Action in the Soil and Water Conservation Phase of the State Agricultural Program signed on September 19, 1950.

3. Extension agents assisted in the work and one state specialist was appointed jointly by SCS and the Extension Service.

4. The high point of district organization came in 1952 when 14 counties organized districts. These were valley counties.

5. The dates, counties, referendum notes, and SCS order in which districts were organized during the Final Period 1950-1959 are given (See Table II, Appendix).

6. The number of counties forming districts, each year, for the Final Period, 1950-1959, (See Figure 5, Appendix). These were the valley counties.

III. CONCLUSIONS

1. With time and cooperation most of the problems that appeared during the time it took all (non-valley and valley) counties to organize soil conservation districts were eliminated or agreements reached on methods to be used in solving them.

2. Areas of mutual interest, means of coordinating the efforts of all personnel concerned, and guideposts for local use were delineated.

3. At the county level, better cooperation, less duplication of effort, and increased services to the clientele served by both the Extension Leader of the Extension Service and the Work Unit Conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service ~~requested~~ resulted.

IV. THE FUTURE

As the soil conservation district seeks to be effective in the future, it appears consideration is being given to altering its image as follows:

1. To expand horizons to include assistance to the clientele in other fields of conservation (e.g., pollution control and ecology) as well as continuing the program for conserving and improving the soil.

2. To assist in the field of land use planning by working more closely with city planners, local zoning boards, and other similar groups interested in the orderly growth and development of land so that it can meet the needs of the increasing population for new housing, new industries, and new recreational areas.

These appear to be the projected ways of the future.

SOME REFERENCES

1. Geiger, Robert L., Jr. and Georgie A. Keller. Organization and Development of the Soil Conservation Service. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Circular 13. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, Revised July 1970.

2. Gilbreath, Sam B., Editor, Tennessee Code Annotated. New York, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Incorporated, Vol. 8, 1964 Replacement.

3. Held, R. B. and Marion Clawson. Soil Conservation in Perspective. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 1955.

4. McReynolds, E. C. Personal interviews conducted April 18, 1972. Knoxville, Tennessee.

5. Robinson, J. H. Personal interview conducted September 1971-May 1972. University of Tennessee: Knoxville, Tennessee.

6. Sasser, J. R. Personal interview May 16, 1972. Tennessee State University: Nashville, Tennessee.

7. Simms, D. H. The Soil Conservation Service. New York, New York: Preager Publishers Incorporated, 1970.

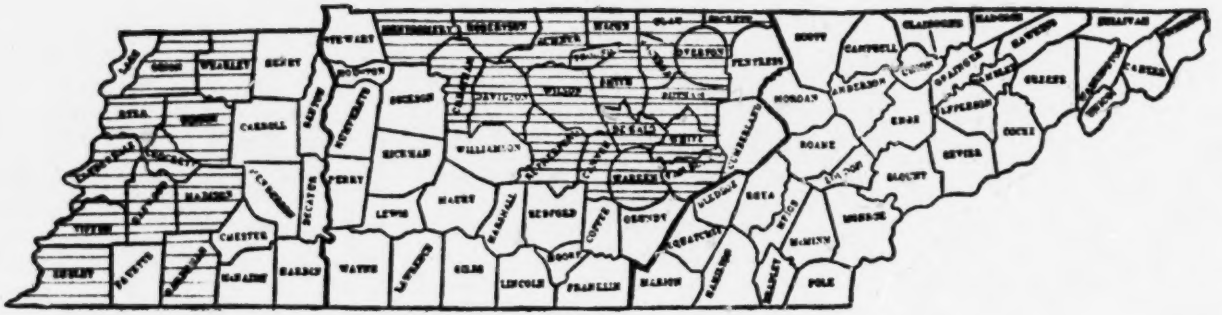
8. Tennessee. State Conservation Needs Committee. Tennessee Soil and Water Conservation Needs Inventory. Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee State Soil Conservation Committee, 1961.

9. Tennessee. State Conservation Needs Inventory Committee. Tennessee Soil and Water Conservation Needs Inventory. Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee Conservation Needs Inventory Committee, January 1971.

10. Thorpe, D. M. "Interagency Coordination in Agricultural Planning and Program Extension with Special Reference to Participation by The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956.

11. Villard, H. H. "Some Notes on Population and Living Levels," Review of Economics and Statistics, Vol. 37, 1955.

APPENDIX

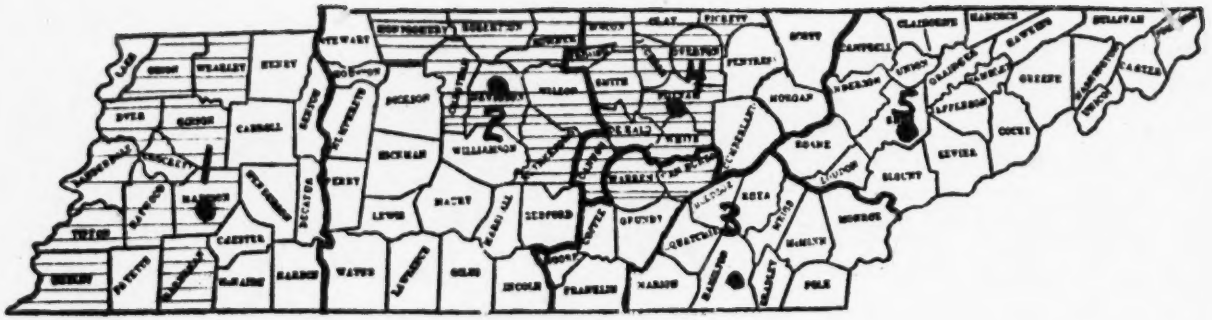


LEGEND

Initial Period, 1940-1949

Final Period, 1950-1959

Figure 1. Counties forming Soil Conservation Districts by periods in Tennessee



LEGEND

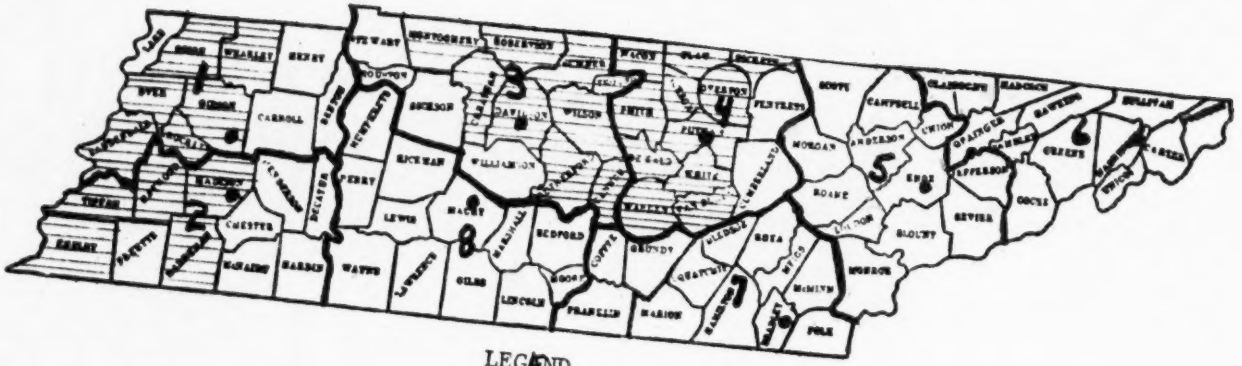
Initial Period 1940-1949

Final Period, 1950-1959

2 Agricultural Extension Supervisory District Number

● Agricultural Extension Supervisory District Headquarters

Figure 2. Counties forming Soil Conservation Districts by periods in Agricultural Extension Supervisory Districts of Tennessee.



LEGEND

Initial Period, 1940-1949

Final Period, 1950-1959

● SCS Area Headquarters

8 Area Number

Figure 3. Counties forming Soil Conservation Districts by periods in Soil Conservation Service areas of Tennessee.

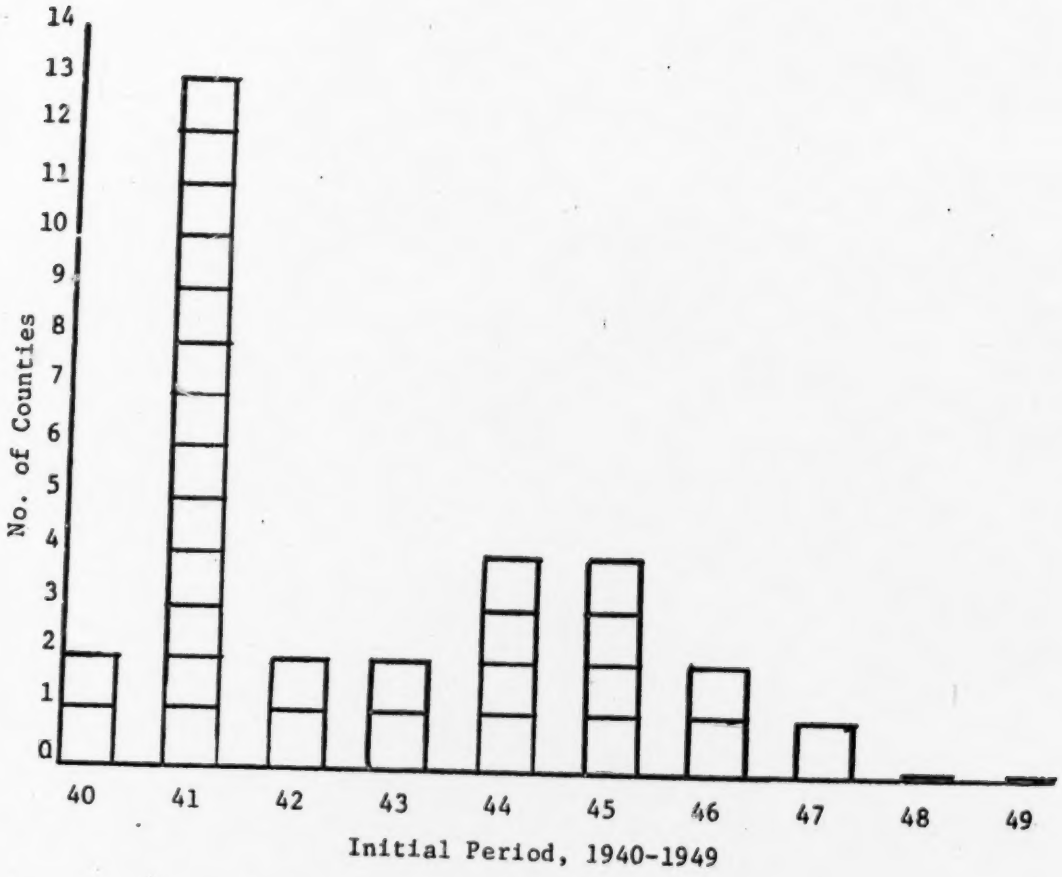


Figure 4. Numbers of counties organizing soil conservation districts by years during the Initial Period.

TABLE I

ORDER IN WHICH COUNTIES ORGANIZED SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS DURING THE INITIAL PERIOD, 1940-1949*

Date of Certificate of Organization	Name of County	SCS District Number
June 13, 1940	Sumner	1
June 13, 1940	Lauderdale	2
July 9, 1940, January 7, 1947[a]	Obion	3
February 19, 1941	Weakley	4
February 19, 1941	Gibson	5
February 19, 1941	Putnam	6
June 25, 1941	Robertson	7
June 25, 1941	Rutherford	8
July 10, 1941	Madison	10
August 19, 1941	DeKalb	9
August 19, 1941	Hardeman	11
September 24, 1941	Warren	12
September 24, 1941	Crockett	13
October 14, 1941	Tipton	14
October 14, 1941	Dyer	15
November 7, 1941	White	16
March 13, 1942	Haywood	17
November 24, 1942	Van Buren	18
February 24, 1943	Cannon	19
July 24, 1943	Wilson	20
August 20, 1944	Smith	21
August 20, 1944	Jackson	22
August 20, 1944	Montgomery	23
August 20, 1944	Cheatham	24
January 17, 1945	Trousdale	25
January 17, 1945	Overton	26
January 17, 1945	Clay	27
April 26, 1945	Pickett	28
January 30, 1946	Davidson	29
February 13, 1946	Macon	30
September 2, 1947	Shelby	31

*Source: Minutes of county organizational meetings, Extension Plant and Soil Science files (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1960). (Mimeographed.)

[a]The first date is when part of Obion County organized a district and the second date is when the remaining part of the county formed a district and the two parts became one.

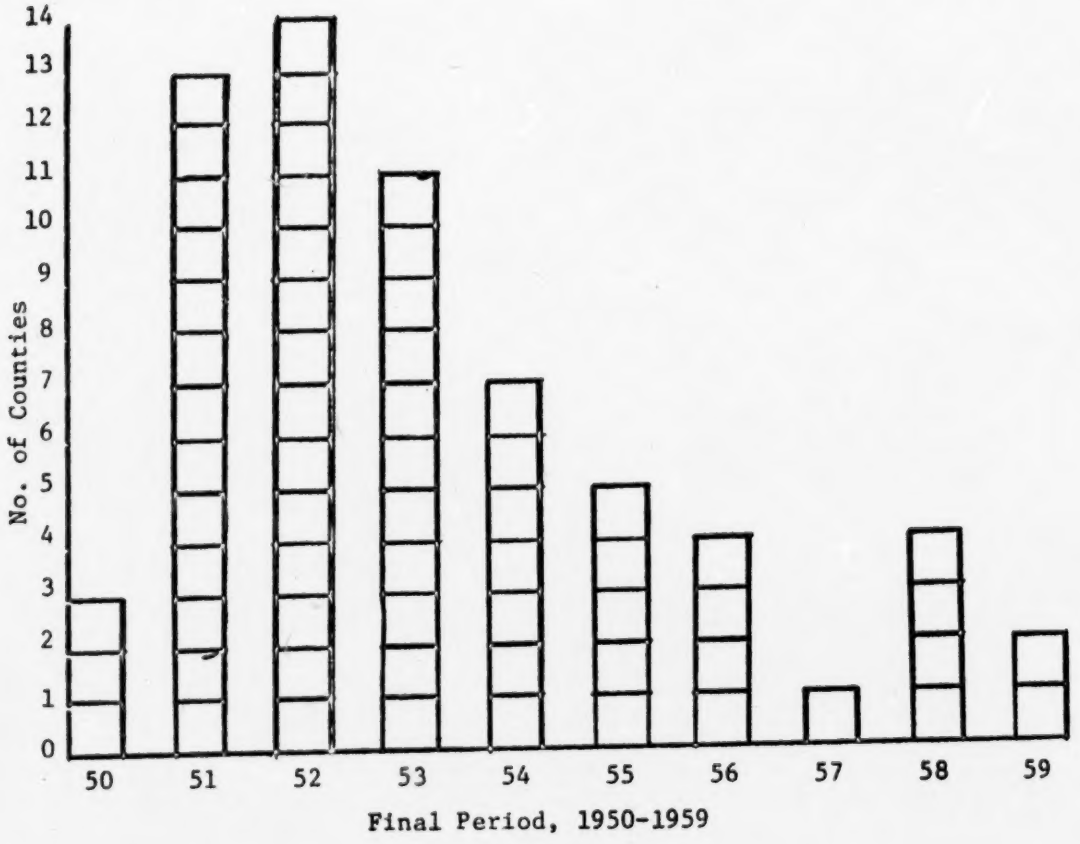


Figure 5. Numbers of counties organizing soil conservation districts by years during the Final Period.

TABLE II

ORDER IN WHICH COUNTIES ORGANIZED SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS DURING THE FINAL PERIOD, 1950-1959*

Date of Certificate of Organization	Name of County	Vote For and Against the Referendum For Organizing[a]	SCS District Number
June 29, 1950	Carroll	b	32
June 29, 1950	McNairy	b	33
October 30, 1950	Fayette	280-27	35
January 8, 1951	Williamson	368-6	34
February 17, 1951	Chester	240-8	36
April 10, 1951	Franklin	254-2	38
April 20, 1951	Henderson	393-0	37
June 28, 1951	Sequatchie	45-11	40
June 28, 1951	Hamilton	163-20	41
June 28, 1951	Marion	77-47	42
June 28, 1951	Bledsoe	284-9	43
June 28, 1951	Henry	100-2	44
June 28, 1951	Houston	69-30	45
July 2, 1951	Maury	418-1	39
July 6, 1951	Lincoln	468-3	46
July 18, 1951	Hickman	277-6	47
February 25, 1952	Meigs	170-3	49
February 25, 1952	Lawrence	1226-19	50
February 27, 1952	Dickson	445-10	48
February 27, 1952	Giles	315-1	51
March 7, 1952	Bradley	156-1	52
March 7, 1952	Rhea	147-10	53
March 7, 1952	Coffee	461-14	54
April 28, 1952	Decatur	412-3	55
May 12, 1952	Marshall	469-9	56
June 18, 1952	Hardin	276-30	58
June 20, 1952	Hawkins	405-6	57
July 7, 1952	Bedford	733-7	59
October 20, 1952	Knox	253-5	60
December 30, 1952	Morgan	247-3	61
March 13, 1953	Lewis	217-1	62
March 18, 1953	Stewart	289-1	63
May 11, 1953	Humphreys	220-7	64
June 30, 1953	Union	247-7	66
July 6, 1953	Cocke	619-2	65
August 17, 1953	Grainger	268-7	68
August 20, 1953	Sullivan	247-3	67
November 3, 1953	Grundy	78-0	70
November 6, 1953	Blount	317-7	72
November 25, 1953	Perry	295-3	69
December 16, 1953	Wayne	247-4	71

TABLE II (continued)

Date of Certificate of Organization	Name of County	Vote For and Against The Referendum For Organizing[a]	SCS District Number
April 16, 1954	Scott	439-0	74
June 4, 1954	Moore	168-3	73
July 3, 1954	Hamblen	317-8	75
August 6, 1954	Sevier	239-106	76
September 29, 1954	Johnson	738-13	77
December 28, 1954	Greene	1451-34	78
December 29, 1954	McMinn	236-9	79
February 17, 1955	Washington	661-35	80
March 10, 1955	Unicoi	145-3	81
March 24, 1955	Fentress	162-0	82
April 27, 1955	Monroe	353-2	83
October 12, 1955	Cumberland	246-4	84
January 9, 1956	Polk	178-0	85
May 1, 1956	Hancock	386-4	86
June 11, 1956	Loudon	313-1	87
June 18, 1956	Claiborne	501-4	88
December 6, 1957	Campbell	166-16	89
January 10, 1958	Benton	278-8	90
June 3, 1958	Jefferson	294-5	91
June 4, 1958	Roane	314-30	92
November 17, 1958	Anderson	398-12	93
February 4, 1959	Carter	117-31	94
September 9, 1959	Lake	91-0	95

*Source: Minutes of county organizational meetings, Extension Plant and Soil Science files (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1960). (Mimeographed.)

[a]The first number refers to the votes in favor of referendum for organizing and the second number refers to the votes against referendum for organizing.

[b]The votes for or against the referendum for organizing are not available for these dates or any previous dates.

ERIC Clearinghouse
OCT 4 1972
on Adult Education